



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PUC SEEKING PUBLIC COMMENT ON AVISTA'S PROPOSED RATE INCREASE

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) is hosting a virtual public comment hearing on Wednesday, June 7, 2023, at 6 p.m. PDT. The event provides customers of Avista an opportunity to comment via Zoom on the impacts of the utility's proposed increase to natural gas rates. Customers may also submit comments in writing or by phone through June 22, 2023, to be included in staff's opening testimony of this case.

Avista filed a request to increase rates by 7.4 percent on average over all 106,000 Oregon customers. This would impact customer rates differently depending on usage and customer type – residential, business, or industrial customers. For a residential customer in a single-family home using an average 47 therms per month, a current monthly bill is about \$77.01. With Avista's proposed increase, the average residential customer bill would increase to about \$83.21 per month. For the average residential customer, this represents an increase of \$6.20 a month, or an 8.06 percent increase.

Avista identifies additional capital investments, including investments to maintain and expand its natural gas distribution facilities, and the effect of high inflation levels on the company's operational costs, including interest rates, labor, and materials as the reasons for the proposed increase.

Avista's general rate change request is undergoing a nearly year-long review and will be fully investigated on behalf of natural gas customers by the PUC, the Oregon Citizens' Utility Board, the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers, Sierra Club and Climate Solutions. This public comment hearing is part of that investigation, which will conclude in December when the Commissioners rule on the request. New rates, if approved, are expected to go into effect January 1, 2024. Any rate change approved as part of this general rate change filing would be in addition to the annual adjustment made to customer rates for the actual price of natural gas for the year. The purchased gas adjustment, which can be an increase or a decrease in customer rates, would go into effect November 1, 2023.

Comment via Zoom or phone on June 7

Interested individuals may participate in the virtual public comment hearing to provide verbal comments to the Commissioners and the Administrative Law Judge presiding over this case.

When: Wednesday, June 7, 2023, from 6-7 p.m. PDT
This meeting may go beyond the scheduled end time to allow more people to comment, so please log in before 7 p.m. PDT.

View the meeting agenda to access the Zoom link and phone-in details at <https://bit.ly/439Je5x>.

Docket No.: [UG 461](#)

Submit comments directly to the PUC by June 22, 2023

- email PUC.PublicComments@puc.oregon.gov
- Call 503-378-6600 or 800-522-2404 (all relay calls accepted)
- Mail comments to: Oregon Public Utility Commission, Attn: AHD – UG 461, PO Box 1088, Salem, OR 97308-1088

Comments received later are still appreciated but may not be addressed in Staff's opening testimony in this case.

Stay Informed

To stay informed throughout Avista's proposed rate change process, individuals may request to be added to the distribution list to receive publicly available documents. Submit requests by email to puc.hearings@puc.oregon.gov or by calling 503-378-6678. Please specify Docket No. UG 461 in the request.

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The PUC regulates customer rates and services of the state's investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities, including Portland General Electric, Idaho Power, Pacific Power, Avista, Cascade Natural, and NW Natural. The PUC also regulates landline telephone providers and select water companies. The PUC's mission is to ensure Oregonians have access to safe, reliable, and fairly priced utility services that advance state policy and promote the public interest. We use an inclusive process to evaluate differing viewpoints and visions of the public interest and arrive at balanced, well-reasoned, independent decisions supported by fact and law. For more information about the PUC, visit oregon.gov/puc.